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FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL
DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS
HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 26 February 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the texts of the appeal issued on 22 February 1998 to the peoples and States of the world and international organizations by the inhabitants of the town of Khodjaly (annex I) and the appeal issued on 23 February 1998 to the heads of State and peoples and religious leaders of the world by the heads of the Christian and Jewish communities of Azerbaijan (annex II) in connection with the sixth anniversary of the genocide perpetrated by Armenian forces in the town of Khodjaly on 26 February 1992.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly under items 46 and 113 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Eldar KOULIEV
Permanent Representative

* A/53/50.

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ANNEX I

[Original: Russian]

Appeal issued on 22 February 1998 to the peoples and States of the world and international organizations by the inhabitants of the town of Khodjaly in connection with the sixth anniversary of the genocide in Khodjaly

Six years have passed since the Khodjaly genocide - one of the bloodiest crimes in the history of mankind.

The date 26 February was proclaimed the Day of the Khodjaly Genocide and National Mourning by a decision of the Milli Mejlis (parliament) of the Azerbaijani Republic. On the orders of the President of the Azerbaijani Republic, a minute of silence is declared every year on 26 February at 1700 hours in the territory of the Azerbaijani Republic to honour the memory of the victims of the Khodjaly genocide. All international organizations have been informed of this. The Azerbaijani people spends this day every year in profound mourning and sorrow.

On this day six years ago, Armenian separatists, armed with the most modern equipment, which was provided to them free of charge by their patrons abroad, and with the direct assistance of the 366th motor-rifle regiment of the former USSR, stationed in Hankendi, committed an unthinkable, brutal act. Having razed the town of Khodjaly, they mercilessly destroyed hundreds of helpless, innocent people. They did not spare even children, women or old people. As a result of the atrocities by the criminal military units, 613 inhabitants of Khodjaly were shekhidy (victims) and 487 were disabled. From among the peaceful population of Khodjaly, 1,275 persons were taken prisoner and subjected to unprecedented Armenian oppression, insults and humiliation. To this day, the fate of 150 persons is unknown. Among the shekhidy, there were 106 women and 63 small children. Seventy-five of the disabled were boys and girls who had not reached adulthood. Six families were totally wiped out; 25 children lost both parents and 130 small children lost one of their parents.

In this crime, 56 persons were killed with particular cruelty and savagery. They were burned alive, beheaded and scalped; the eyes of small children were cut out and the stomachs of pregnant women were slashed open with bayonets. The corpses were subjected to outrages that cannot be described in words.

In general, the Khodjaly tragedy, which demonstrated the aim to destroy the Azerbaijani people, is a result of systematic genocide by Armenian nationalists. Armenian nationalist-separatists, conducting a policy of ethnic cleansing and committing acts of mass bloodshed from time to time, expelled Azerbaijanis from their historical homeland. After violently driving the last Azerbaijani from Armenia, they began the occupation of the territory of Azerbaijan. The fact that the civilized world community did not attempt to prevent this savagery and failed to characterize in political and legal terms the brutal actions and bloody aggression by the Armenians as an act against humanity inspired them to be even more merciless in carrying out their intentions to create the State of

"Greater Armenia" by seizing our territory. As a consequence, those guilty of the Khodjaly genocide committed further crimes: 20 per cent of our territory was occupied; and more than a million refugees were forced to live in intolerable conditions. And this was a crime which was directed not only against Azerbaijan, but against all mankind and humaneness.

The horror endured will remain forever in the memory of all our people, including the memory of the people of Khodjaly who by chance survived this repeated slaughter of the twentieth century. For six years now, we have been appealing to the peoples and States of the world, international organizations and all people who believe in the Most High. We have one wish - that the world community, demonstrating that it is not indifferent to human pain and that it relates to all peoples and nations with equal mercy and objectivity, condemn the Khodjaly genocide and now, in bringing about a peaceful settlement of the Karabakh problem, put an end to the obstinate behaviour of the aggressor.

Forthrightly supporting the desire and determination of the President of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliev, to end the war through peaceful means, we express the hope that, for the tranquillity of our radiant world, so that never again anywhere in the world will the mass destruction of people be permitted, you, believing that justice is paramount, will clearly condemn the crime of those who committed the Khodjaly genocide. We believe that, if this is done, the Khodjaly genocide will be the last tragedy that people will hear of and see.

ANNEX II

[Original: Russian]

Appeal issued on 23 February 1998 to the heads of State, peoples and religious leaders of the world by the heads of the Christian and Jewish communities of Azerbaijan

We, the heads of the Christian and Jewish communities of Azerbaijan, appeal to the conscience of the world community and of all people of good will.

Azerbaijan is the indivisible homeland and the common home of the sons and daughters of many peoples professing different religions. For 10 years now, our country has been the innocent victim of aggression by Armenia, which seized and is still holding a fifth of the territory that has been Azerbaijani since time immemorial.

The war, imposed by a greedy neighbour, brought Azerbaijan and its multinational people enormous distress and suffering, which are continuing to this day. The barbarous acts perpetrated by Armenia led to the death of tens of thousands of people, destroyed the fruits of their creative labour, laid waste to towns and villages and desecrated temples and cemeteries. The cruelty and savagery of the aggressor were horribly demonstrated in Khodjaly, where the peaceful, defenceless population of this entire Azerbaijani town, including, women, children and old people, were subjected to barbarous destruction. The tragedy of Khodjaly, which occurred exactly six years ago, is comparable to the tragedies that took place in Lidice and Khatyn.

It is incomprehensible that such a crime against humanity was committed at the end of the twentieth century. One of the main reasons for it is the fact that world public opinion, from the very beginning, failed to condemn Armenia as a usurper that flouted all the norms of international law and general morality. Convinced of its impunity, the aggressor still continues to occupy 20 per cent of the territory of Azerbaijan, having turned more than a million people into refugees. The most recent events in Armenia demonstrate that that country does not intend to renounce its policy of expansionism and is prepared to resort to any means, including military ones, in order to hold on to the Azerbaijani lands that were seized by force of arms and to thwart efforts to achieve a just peace.

Armenia's actions are a defiant challenge to all mankind, a test of its conscience and humanity and its faithfulness to the age-old values of goodness and justice. The sacred service of peacekeeping signifies the affirmation of the will of the Most High on Earth, peace, the just settlement of all conflicts and the elimination of hotbeds of international tension. We, the heads of the Christian and Jewish religions in Azerbaijan, also see our duty in this. We fervently wish that all peoples and countries hear our call, be filled with our pain and immediately take decisive steps to halt the aggressor and restore peace in our tormented Azerbaijani land. We request religious leaders to be our ambassadors and bring this appeal to their peoples and Governments so that every heart will be imbued with our impassioned entreaty.

In affirmation of peace, kindness and justice and in order to eliminate evil and violence, all people, regardless of their national affiliation and religion, must stand together, for we have a single Creator and we share the same humanity. With our faith and hope in this, we raise our prayers to the Most High. Amen.

(Signed) Archimandrite Aleksandr
Diocesan Head of the Russian
Orthodox Churches in Azerbaijan

(Signed) Moshe BEKKER
Head of the European Jewish
Community in Baku

(Signed) Semyon IKHILOV
Head of the Community of
Mountain Jews in Baku